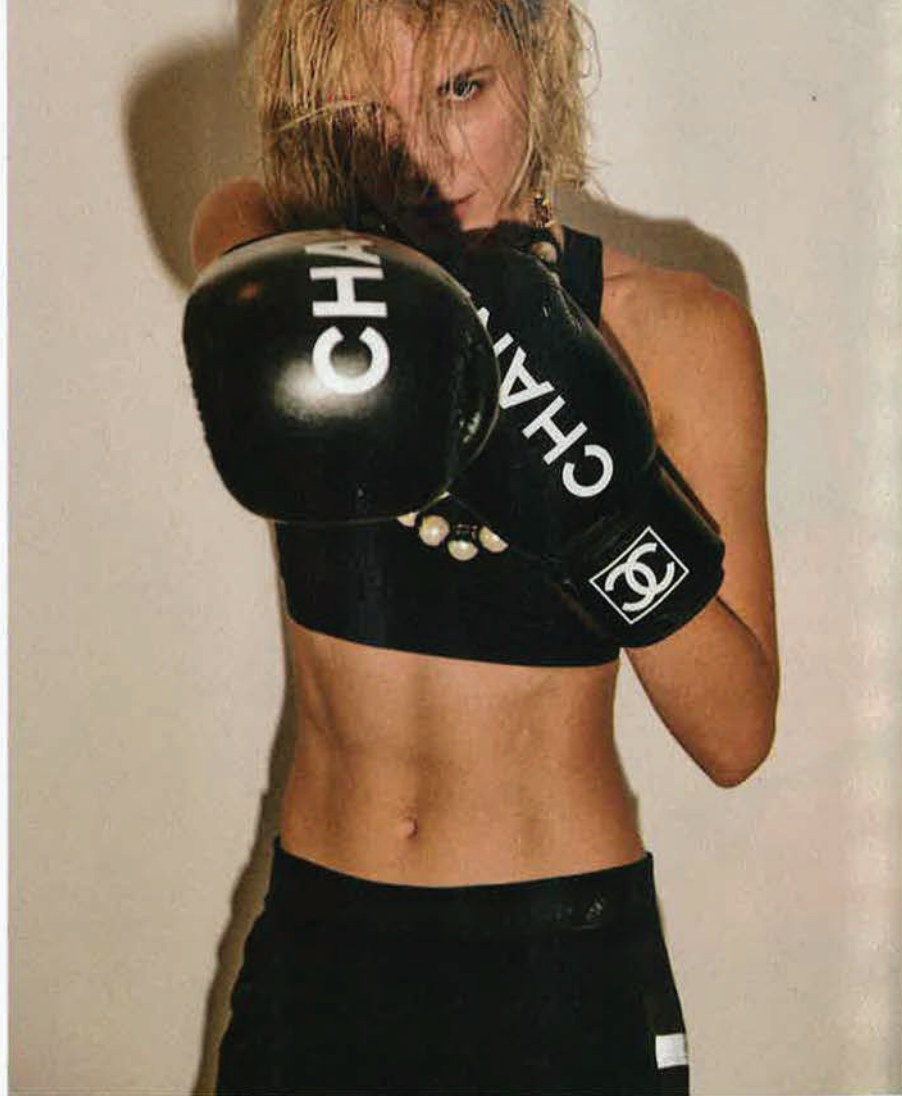


FIRST-TIMER'S GUIDE

Emsculpt

This electromagnetic treatment burns fat and builds muscle—all you have to do is lie down. By Erin Reimel



WHAT IT IS

Emsculpt is an in-office body-contouring treatment that targets fat and muscle in the stomach, buttocks, and thighs (with other areas in line for FDA approval). The Emsculpt machine's paddle transmits high-intensity focused electromagnetic energy (HIFEM) through the skin, which induces approximately 20,000 muscle contractions—far more than you'd get from doing regular crunches or sit-ups at the gym. "This overload of activity in the muscles leads to effective muscular growth and burns local fat stores," says New York City dermatologist Arash Akhavan, MD. But it's not as simple as snapping your fingers and dropping two dress sizes. "The ideal Emsculpt candidate is of average weight and has a stubborn area of fat that does not benefit from exercise," explains New York City-based dermatologist Patricia Wexler, MD. When it comes to toning the butt, the machine's settings can be tweaked to lift and tone rather than to burn fat.

COST

Four 30-minute Emsculpt sessions (the recommended starting package) run between \$3,000 and \$4,000.

WHAT I EXPECTED

I've heard Emsculpt described as the equivalent of doing thousands of sit-ups, minus actual exercise. (You're lying down the entire time.) In my case, I have some stomach flab I've been wanting to get rid of, but I also have a hard time fitting regular workouts into my schedule. I was only looking to slim down a bit, so this sounded like an easy route to flat abs...almost too easy.

WHAT IT'S ACTUALLY LIKE

First, I remove my jeans. They have a metal button, which can't be anywhere near the device's powerful magnets. (The same goes for copper IUDs, pacemakers, or similar metal objects implanted in the body, which rule out Emsculpt for those patients.) Next, I cover up with a paper blanket and lie back with my stomach exposed. Akhavan's associate places a paddle that looks a bit like a defibrillator over my abdomen and straps it on. The paddle begins to vibrate my stomach to its core, evoking childhood memories of getting zapped while playing my Operation board game. Each contraction feels like a rapid and uncontrollable twitch through my stomach and down into my thighs.

I try not to laugh or gasp in surprise each

time the technician raises the machine's energy level, in increments from zero (which feels like a prolonged tickle) to 100 (an intense spasm). Every few minutes, the vibrations stop and I hear a loud clicking noise that shakes my stomach. This tapping is a resting phase, allowing the muscles to recover and dispel lactic acid (which builds up during a normal workout), so I won't feel the burn of 20,000 sit-ups in the morning. For me, this targeted energy pulsing through my abs is the most uncomfortable part, but it's not unbearable. Honestly, what bothers me most is not being able to check my phone for 30 minutes. I wish I'd brought a book.

THE RESULTS

While I never wake up with washboard abs, after four sessions within a two-week period, followed by several weeks of waiting for the results to take effect (generally six to eight weeks), I start to notice some changes. My jeans fit better. My stomach looks tighter. Adding in exercise—which I'm now inspired to keep up with—and a healthier diet, I no longer notice my pouch so much. I still have some belly flab to burn, but I wasn't the fittest patient to begin with. For me, the treatment was the perfect kick starter.